will go out into the midst of Egypt.

A prayer of David . . . Keep my soul, for I am pious.[9] Levi and R. Isaac:[10] The one says, Thus spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He; Master of the world, am I not pious? All the kings of the East and the West sleep to the third hour [of the day], but I, at midnight I rise to give thanks unto Thee.[11] The other one says: Thus spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the world, am I not pious? All the kings of the East and the West sit with all their pomp among their company, whereas my hands are soiled with the blood [of menstruation], with the foetus and the placenta, in order to declare a woman clean for her husband.[12] And what is more, in all that I do I consult my teacher, Mephibosheth, and I say to him: My teacher Mephibosheth, is my decision right? Did I correctly convict, correctly acquit, correctly declare clean, correctly declare unclean? And I am not ashamed [to ask]. R. Joshua, the son of R. Iddi, says Which verse [may be cited in support]? And I recite Thy testimonies before kings and am not ashamed.[13] A Tanna taught: His name was not Mephibosheth. And why then was he called Mephibosheth? Because he humiliated[14] David in the Halachah. Therefore was David worthy of the privilege that Kileab[15] should issue from him. R. Johanan said: His name was not Kileab but Daniel. Why then was he called Kileab? Because he humiliated [maklim] Mephibosheth [ab][16] in the Halachah. And concerning him Solomon said in his wisdom: My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart will be glad, even mine.[17] And he said further: My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that taunteth me.[18]

But how could David call himself pious? It is not written: I am not sure [lule] to see the good reward of the Lord in the land of the living;[19] and a Tanna taught in the name of R. Jose: Why are there dots upon the world 'lule'?[20] David spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Master of the world, I am sure that you will pay a good reward to the righteous in the world to come, but I do not know whether I shall have a share in it'?[21] [He was afraid that] some sin might cause [his exclusion].[22] This conforms to the following saying of R. Jacob b. Iddi. For R. Jacob b. Iddi pointed to a contradiction. One verse reads: And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest,[23] and the other verse reads: Then Jacob was greatly afraid![24] [The answer is that] he thought that some sin might cause [God's promise not to be fulfilled]. Similarly it has been taught: Till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over that Thou hast gotten.[25] 'Till Thy people pass over, O Lord': this is the first entry [into the Land]. 'Till the people pass over that Thou hast gotten': this is the second entry. Hence the Sages say: The intention was to perform a miracle for Israel[26] in the days of Ezra, even as it was performed for them in the days of Joshua bin Nun,[27] but sin caused [the miracle to be withheld].[28]

THE SAGES SAY: UNTIL MIDNIGHT. Whose view did the Sages adopt?[29] If it is R. Eliezer's view, then let them express themselves in the same way as R. Eliezer?

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(1) He was the High Priest of David.

(2) II Sam. XX, 23.

(3) The Sanhedrin (Rashi). The Tosafists, however, refer this to the Urim and Tummim.

(4) May be cited in support of the story of David's harp.

(5) Ps. LVII 9.

(6) Here the Gemara resumes the discussion of the question raised above as to how it is possible that David knew something which Moses did not know.

(7) The incident of Ex. XI, 4.

(8) The particle ka being rendered 'like' and not 'about'.

(9) Ps. LXXXVI, 1-2.

(10) Offer different homiletical interpretations.

(11) Ibid. CXIX, 62.

(12) The restrictions of Lev. XII, 2ff do not apply to all cases of abortion nor is all discharge treated as menstrual, and David is represented as occupying himself with deciding such questions instead of with feasting. MS.M. omits 'blood'.